

June 2019

Prayer for creative solutions

God is creator – and this is how he introduces himself right in the first verse of the Bible. “In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1). Just a short but close look at our world shows that God is infinitely **creative and innovative**. God has no lack of resources. He always has an innovative idea and is full of solutions to answer our questions! He never has any worries about the future. Besides he knows everything. And this richness in creative energy, knowledge and power stands alongside his richness in goodness and love. The God who knows all and can do everything is a God who loves and always wants to reveal his goodness and kindness to this world! It is the revelation and the personal experience of this kindness that leads people to repentance. (See Romans 2:4). We should always be aware of this when we are looking into the complex issues in politics, the economy and the search for solutions in our time.

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable (hidden) things you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3) – this is still the call of the Holy Spirit today to ask him for **specific solutions** to problems in our society where we do not have the knowledge we need and it is even hidden from us. For in him there is an endless and ever accessible reservoir of wisdom and ideas. And he wants to help us!

We are created in his image and carry in us a bit of this wonderful creative nature. This is easy for us to realise when we think about the many discoveries made by mankind through all the centuries, such as the invention of the wheel and the development of vaccines. Did these not spring from the heart of God?

“The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you” (Luke 8:10) is what he is saying to us, because he certainly wants to continue to share with us his thoughts and ideas. For in this way, heaven – God’s kingdom – comes to earth! God’s thoughts should be the inspiration for mankind to bring about sustainable solutions in all areas of society. In a world which is full of anxiety about the future, we as intercessors can approach God in prayer to ask specifically for creative solutions. What specific questions about the future do you want to bring before God in prayer?

As you begin your time of prayer:

- **Think of a problem situation within society at this time and how help from God would be evident. Can you see that he is already involved?**
- **In a few words, pray specifically for God’s creative solution to this problem.** -AS-

Answers to prayer

- Thanks that the German parliament has decided to withdraw financial support from the BDS movement due to its clearly anti-Semitic objectives and methods.
- Thanks that German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has complained about the unreasonable way in which Israel

is continually marginalised in the UN Security Council. Israel is “accused, unfairly treated and excluded”. Let us pray for new ways in which the German-Israeli friendship can be expressed.

- Thank God for his protection. Between 2010 and 2017 altogether 13 terrorist attacks by Islamist groups were prevented. Pray for God’s continued loving protection for our land. -AS-

Artificial Intelligence

Germany ought to be at the forefront in artificial intelligence (AI). Until now we have been clearly left behind by the competition from China and the USA. AI is nothing more than software which adapts itself by learning from monitoring sample operating routines and data. Machines are so programmed that they can emulate human actions and reactions. A machine can process data much more quickly than humans, but cannot think for itself. Today industry and also medical services are already relying on AI with the use of robots – even for clinical operations. AI is developing into a key technology and can in no way be stopped. Experts estimate that its introduction will have a greater effect on the national economy than the invention of the steam engine or the advancements in information and communication technologies.

In Germany we often lack a vision and a clear perspective for the future. Many are afraid of AI. They are worried that by its introduction jobs will be lost, our world will become increasingly dehumanised and clever machines might eventually take over. However, without a rapid increase in our knowledge of AI, we will inevitably lose our position as a leading industrial nation. Scientists complain that in Germany we are too hesitant to embrace new technologies. We do not like to take risks. We also require less bureaucracy for research and development projects and company start-ups in order to make Germany more attractive for investment in the future. The introduction of AI also raises ethical questions. Trusted systems and measures to protect our security are increasingly being questioned as to their relevance in today’s world. Our land needs again a renewed firm trust in God so that together we are able to step into the future.

Prayer:

- **Thanks for Germany’s calling to be a blessing to the world with its technical “know-how”. (Psalm 69:30)**
- **Pray for courage instead of fear and a renewed trust in God within our people. (Proverbs 3:5-6)**
- **That science, research and development, the economy and industry in Germany will again be firmly aligned with God’s will and purposes for our land. (James 1:5)**

-AS-

New rules for organ donation

Health Minister Jens Spahn wants to reform the system for organ donation. Today our hospitals have the capability to surgically transplant six different organs. At least 9,400

patients are now waiting in Germany for a life-saving organ. According to surveys, many Germans have a positive attitude towards organ transplantation. But only a small number carry an organ donor card. Therefore Spahn wants to introduce an "opt-out" system, whereby everyone will automatically be an organ donor unless they have formally recorded an objection during their lifetime. Until now we have a "consent" system whereby only those who formally agree can be organ donors. Spahn wants to force everyone to make a decision concerning organ donation.

An alternative proposal by parliamentarians from the Union (CDU/CSU), FDP, Greens and Leftists parties is to keep a system by consent. Citizens should however be better informed about organ donation and be able to more easily make a decision. There should be no pressure to consent as a kind of duty to society.

Organ donation raises many questions from a Christian-ethical point of view. With the tremendous growth in what is now medically possible, our society urgently needs to ask God for guidance and leadership in these increasingly far-reaching questions of life and death. The German parliament will discuss and vote on the proposals in the autumn without a party whip.

Prayer:

- **For a God inspired and guided debate on how parliament should proceed with the question of organ donation. (Proverbs 8:15-16)**
- **For God to take control and to guide us in the many complex ethical issues of our time. (John 15:5)** -AS-

Power of large family clans in Germany

In Germany there are about 20 large criminal clans (gangs) which are resident in Berlin and the large cities in Bremen, Lower Saxony and North-Rhine Westphalia. They are mainly comprised of large Arab families, the members of which came to Germany as refugees in the 1980s and 1990s. The total number of family clan members is estimated to be about 200,000. Not all family members can be deemed to be criminals, but quite a few however are involved in the criminal activities of their families or cover-up for them. Some family clans have been accused of hundreds of offences: from coercion to trade drugs to murder. Tight-knit family cohesion, which is a major factor behind the committing of criminal offences and the intimidation of witnesses, police and the judicial system, also earns them respect and power. People who bring the criminal activities of these clans to light receive death threats and from then on are dependent on police protection. Witnesses of offences withdraw or add qualifications to their statements. The use of investigating magistrates who hear witnesses immediately after the offence can be of help here, as their statements are regarded as reliable in criminal proceedings. Clan criminality has long been underestimated, but now the state is getting far tougher on these cases. The introduction of effective methods of investigation, such as the secret recording of conversations, is however made somewhat difficult because of legal barriers. The police are often overburdened by lack of resources to stem the organised crime of these clans.

Prayer:

- **For protection, courage and wisdom for investigators, state lawyers, magistrates and judges and effective strategies to investigate crime. (Isaiah 33:5-6)**
- **That the clan structures and their fear-based methods will be broken apart and the justice system can win through. (Psalm 68:28)**
- **To reach this subculture of large family clans with the gospel. (John 3:16)** -TF-

Withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran

At the beginning of May 2018, the USA withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran that was agreed in 2015 and in August sanctions again came into force as announced.

US President Trump based the withdrawal on the fact that the deal did not prevent Iran from building a nuclear bomb, but rather released finances to continue the development. Actually the deal only set limits on the nuclear program by Iran for civil purposes with international inspection, while the nuclear weapons program of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, begun in 1984 under Ayatollah Khomeini, would continue unimpeded with the support of North Korea.

In April 2018 Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu revealed information from the security service on how close the program is to building a nuclear bomb. Germany and the other partners to the deal (France, Great Britain, Russia and China) however held on to the nuclear deal. The EU Commission then passed a law to enable the US sanctions to be by-passed to protect trade agreements of European companies with Iran. However many international concerns cut ties with Iran or reduced their oil imports, which has since deepened the economic crisis in Iran.

At the beginning of May, Iran announced officially that it was withdrawing from some of its commitments under the nuclear deal. Since then the tension in the Gulf region has been rising with several attacks on oil-tankers and the Saudi oil-pipeline to the Red Sea, from where oil is exported to the USA and Europe.

Prayer:

- **For Germany to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and for exposure of the false arguments. (Isaiah 8:9ff)**
- **For no death pacts with the enemies of Israel – economic interests shall not be placed above the security of Israel. (Isaiah 31:1-3)**
- **For US troops to remain in North-East Syria to protect the Kurdish region freed from the Islamic State (IS) and the current Democratic Self Administration (DSA) of Rojava (all part of ancient Assyria), and access to Israel. (Isaiah 19:23-25)** -KH-

Dates for your diary

- 19.06.-23.06 Protestant Church Conference – Evangelischer Kirchentag (EKD) in Dortmund
- June-July Christopher Street Day (LGBTQ) parades in many cities throughout Germany

*May God bless your time of prayer,
Rosemarie Stresemann, Alexander Schlueter and Team*